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Message Text

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----------033857 261947Z /41
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
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INFO USDEL MBFR VIENNA PRIORITY
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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PARM, SOPN

SUBJECT: JANUARY 26 PRESS ROUNDUP

LONDON FOR AMB/EX

1. PAUL LEWIS OF NEW YORK TIMES REPORTED FROM PARIS THAT PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING CALLED FOR CREATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL SATELLITE SYSTEM TO MONITOR FLOW OF ARMS AROUND WORLD. LEWIS SAID PROPOSAL WAS PART OF FRENCH INITIATIVE THAT HAS BEEN IN PREPARATION FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AND "EFFECTIVELY ENDS FRANCE'S LONGSTANDING REFUSAL TO BECOME INVOLVED IN DISARMAMENT MATTERS." TIMES CORRE-SPONDENT SAID "MOVE WAS THUS GENERALLY WELCOMED BY WESTERN DIPLOMATS AS SIGN THAT FRANCE WAS NOW SEEKING WAYS TO PLAY MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN ARMS CONTROL EFFORTS WITHOUT LOSS OF POLITICAL FACE, JUST AS IT IS DISCREETLY MOVING CLOSER TO
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NATO- IN VIEW OF MANY DIPLOMATS HERE, FRANCE'S INTEREST IN DISARMAMENT WILL INCREASE COHESION AND CREDIBILITY OF U.S. AND OTHER NATO PARTNERS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE NEW AGREEMENTS ON ARMS LIMITATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION AND TO PERSUADE OTHER THIRD-WORLD COUNTRIES TO CURB FAST-GROWING MILITARY ARSENALS." FRENCH DISARMAMENT INITIATIVE, LEWIS REPORTED, CALLS FOR REPLACING GENEVA DISARMAMENT

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CONFERENCE BY NEW CONFERENCE NO LONGER DOMINATED BY U.S. AND USSR WHICH FRANCE WOULD JOIN. IT ALSO CALLS FOR NEW CONFERENCE ON EUROPEAN DISARMAMENT "FROM ATLANTIC TO URALS," ATTENDED BY ALL STATES THAT SIGNED 1975 HELSINKI DECLARATION. CONFERENCE WOULD DEAL WITH NUCLEAR AND CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS AND COULD REPLACE MBFR TALKS IN VIENNA, WHICH FRANCE HAS REFUSED TO JOIN. FRENCH INITIATIVE EXPRESSES SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL DISARMAMENT AGREEMENTS UNDER WHICH NATIONS IN PARTICULAR PARTS OF THE WORLD WOULD RESTRICT THEIR ARMAMENT LEVELS AND BAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS. LEWIS SAID FRENCH GOVERNMENT'S NEW DISPLAY OF INTEREST IN CURBING ARMS RACE IS INTENDED DOMESTICALLY TO UNDERSCORE GOVERNMENT'S SINCERITY ON DISARMAMENT MATTERS "WITH PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN OFFING. INTERNATIONALLY, IT IS TIMED TO INFLUENCE DISCUSSION AT U.N. SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT IN NEW YORK IN MAY." FRANCH PLAN FOR INTERNATIONALLY CONTROLLED SYSTEM OF SPACE SATELLITES TO VERIFY FUTURE ARMS AGREEMENT WOULD BE FINANCED BY TAX ON "OVERARMED" COUNTRIES. LEWIS SAID THIS SATELLITE PLAN "EXCITED MOST INTEREST AMONG DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS HERE, WHO DESCRIBED IT AS ONLY UNEXPECTED PART OF PROPOSALS." MOST CONTROVERSIAL PART OF FRENCH PLAN IS PROPOSAL FOR NEW CONFERENCE ON EUROPEAN DISARMAMENT, LEWIS REPORTED, SAYING MANY WESTERN OFFICIALS FEAR THAT SUCH CONFERENCE WOULD BE UNWIELDY AND LESS EFFECTIVE THAN MORE LIMITED, SLOW-MOVING TALKS NOW BEING HELD IN VIENNA.
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2. BALTIMORE NEWS AMERICAN PUBLISHED SECOND ARTICLE ON CORRESPONDENT JOHN WALLACH'S INTERVIEW WITH AMBASSADOR WARNKE. WALLACH SAID WARNKE WARNED THAT FAILURE TO CONCLUDE NEW SALT PACT WHILE BREZHNEV IS STILL "FUNCTIONING" COULD SPARK NEW ARMS RACE THAT MIGHT PUT NEARLY COMPLETED ACCORD PERMANENTLY OUT OF REACH. "IT WOULD OBVIOUSLY INTRODUCE MORE UNCERTAIN SITUATION IF HE WERE NO LONGER FUNCTIONING," WARNKE SAID. "IF YOU HAVE ANOTHER YEAR IN WHICH TECHNOLOGY RACES AHEAD YOU MAY FIND IT MORE DIFFICULT AT END OF THAT PERIOD TO REACH AS GOOD AN AGREEMENT AS WE COULD TODAY." WALLACH SAID WARNKE STILL EXPECTS TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON FROM GENEVA IN EARLY SPRING WITH AN AGREEMENT, BUT CAUTIONED THAT IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO BREZHNEV IN MEANTIME, "IT WOULD BE BAD FROM STANDPOINT OF ARMS CONTROL WHICH IS MY BUSINESS. OBVIOUSLY, THERE WOULD BE SOME POSSIBILITY OF CONTINUED TACIT RESTRAINT LOOKING TOWARD SALT AGREEMENT, BUT YOU CAN'T COUNT ON THAT.... THERE'S NO QUESTION OF FACT THAT MR. BREZHNEV HAS CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL INVESTMENT IN SALT AND IN DETENTE GENERALLY. AFTER ALL, HE IS ONE WHO REACHED VLADIVOSTOK UNDERSTANDING WITH PRESIDENT FORD, AND AS CONSEQUENCE I

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WOULD SUPPOSE HE FEELS CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL STAKE IN GETTING SALT TWO AGREEMENT." DURING WALLACH INTERVIEW, WARNKE SAID THERE IS NO FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE WHICH IS INTERFERING WITH SALT TWO AGREEMENT. "IT IS QUESTION OF REACHING FINAL FIGURES ON AMOUNT OF REDUCTIONS AND DEFINING NATURE OF QUALITATIVE RESTRAINTS. IF WE MAKE SAME AMOUNT OF PROGRESS DURING FIRST QUARTER OF 1978 THAT WE MADE DURING LAST QUARTER OF 1977, WE'LL HAVE AN AGREEMENT." VANCE

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